

Pesticide Safety

Bug Bombs: Overkill Can Be Dangerous

More information

For poisoning emergencies:

Washington Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222

TTY: 1-800-572-0638

To report pesticide exposure:

Washington State Department of Health

Pesticide Program: 1-888-586-9427

TDD Relay: 1-800-833-6388

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network:

1-800-858-7378

<http://ace.orst.edu/info/nptn>

Washington State Department of Agriculture

Pesticide Management and Compliance

360-902-2040

Washington State University Pesticide Web Page

<http://pep.wsu.edu>



Office of Environmental Health and Safety

P.O. Box 47825

Olympia, WA 98504-7825

1-888-586-9427

DOH Pub 334-023 1/2000

For persons with disabilities, this document
is available on request in other formats.

Please call 1-888-586-9427

(TDD relay 1-800-833-6388).

Prepared in support of Washington State University and
the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's educational
efforts in urban pesticide safety.

Bug bombs, also called insect foggers, are cans of pesticides that spray out all at once. They are used to kill pests, such as cockroaches and fleas. Foggers can be a **serious health and safety hazard** if you use too many or don't follow the directions.

Improper use of foggers can make you sick.

Use foggers only for their intended purpose.

Use no more than the recommended amount.



Too many foggers for the size of your house can cause fires or explosions.

Keep them away from sparks or flames.

Read the warning labels.



More Is Not Better—It's Dangerous.

Some people think, “if one is good, more must be better.” But overkill is a bad idea when it comes to pesticides and foggers.

Most reported cases of overusing pesticides result in visits to the hospital emergency room.

Never use more foggers than are recommended. Get everyone out of the building before you start the fogger.

Foggers use flammable gases to spray out the pesticides.

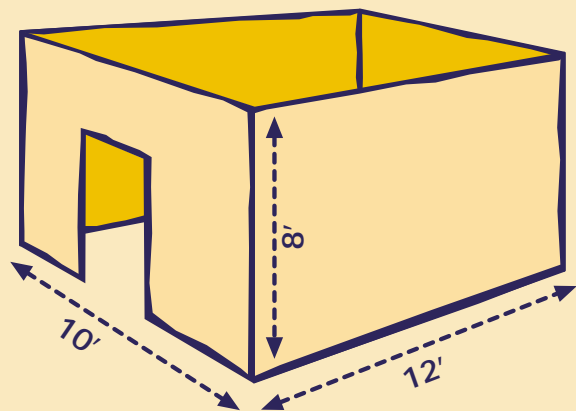
When you use too many foggers, the vapors build up. A spark from a pilot light, furnace, thermostat, water heater or other source can cause a fire or explosion. Be sure to read all the warnings on the label.

How much is safe to use?

Rule of thumb: 1 ounce per 1,000 cubic feet.

A 6-ounce fogger is enough for the average home—one for the whole house. Use a smaller fogger for an apartment. Put the fogger in the largest room and open doors to other rooms and closets.

How do I figure the size of my house in cubic feet?



Measure in feet. Multiply width times length times height for each room in your house. Add together the figures you get for each room. The total for all rooms is the cubic feet of your house.

Example:

A room that is 10 feet wide by 12 feet long and 8 feet high is 960 cubic feet ($10 \times 12 \times 8 = 960$). Using the rule of thumb, a 3-ounce fogger could cover more than three rooms this size.

Safety checklist:

- ☐ **Read** the label and all warnings. Follow the directions exactly.
- ☐ **Use** no more than the recommended amount.
- ☐ **Keep** the fogger away from pilot lights, sparks or flames.
- ☐ **Get** everybody out of the building, including pets. Remove toys and uncovered food.
- ☐ **Stay out** of the building for as long as it says on the label.
- ☐ **Air out** the area completely after using the fogger.
- ☐ **Wash** all tables, counters and surfaces used for food.

Tips on pesticides:

Figure out your pest problem.

Don't overreact. Seeing a few bugs doesn't always mean you need to apply pesticides. Find the least toxic way to get rid of them.

Get the right product.

Read the label. Use a product that works on the kind of bugs you have.

Buy only the amount you need.

To avoid risks of accidents or spills, always handle and dispose of containers properly.

Follow the directions exactly.

Pay close attention to warnings. Never use more than is recommended.

Keep out of reach of children.

Accidents can cause illness and injury. Keep the Washington Poison Center phone number handy.

